No question about being Chinese after handover

Stronger identity good for civic education

By Christine Chow

CIVIC education has greatly improved after the handover because there is less confusion on the question of identity now. "Our identity has been strengthened after the handover. We no longer question it. We're no longer British citizens. We're Chinese," Principal of Chan Shu Kui Memorial School, Gloria Chan Chuk-yue, said at the school's Hong Kong's Reunion With China — First Anniversary Memorial Gathering on 30 June.

The chairman of the program's organisating committee, vice-principal Chui Cheung-ki, said: "The anniversary of the handover is an ideal time to remind our students of the meaningful and significant moment."

With a clearer identity, students are more likely to be involved in social activities. "More than 100 students volunteered to help promote the Lego election last month," Mr Chiu said. Various activities, such as visits to China, are organised by the school to enhance students' national, social and civic awareness.

Last summer, Secondary Six student Eric Tam Wing-lun and Secondary Four counterpart Kwok Ching participated in a Shanghai-Hong Kong exchange program. "Through various cultural activities, we can install in students a true sense of national identity and develop their potential to play positive roles as responsible citizens of Hong Kong," Ms Chan said.

Apart from polishing up their Putonghua, their understanding of the mainland was greatly enhanced by the trip to Shanghai. "Stereotypes of the mainland Chinese were eliminated. I found that they are no different to us," Ching said. Singing the national anthem impressed Eric very much. "Hong Kong people are rather excited when singing the national anthem, whereas the Shanghainese are very serious," he said.

At the end of the gathering, Mr Chiu reminded students that although the past year had been very difficult, "I hope that students, who are future leaders, can equip themselves with knowledge and confidence to cope with various problems". Students also shared the same feelings. "Last year, there were downpours for a week leading up to the handover. It seemed to symbolise a difficult year to come. Today was a sunny day. I wish Hong Kong a bright future," Eric said.

The gathering started with the national anthem. After the principal's address, there was a slide show which reviewed developments after the handover. Finally, a Cantonese pop song, Bright Future, marked the end of the gathering.